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POLITICS AND PRINCIPLES

by Felix Morley

The election campaign now closing has revealed a popular apathy which is the more disturbing because of the magnitude of the issues now confronting the American people. The lack of interest is not fully explained by saying that the outcome is assured in advance.

In more than one respect the United States is literally at the crossroads. During the next four years, policies of the greatest magnitude must be decided, either intelligently or by default. If these decisions are to be made intelligently, it must be done on a better basis than opportunitism. Since principle is involved in all the major issues before the nation, principle must first be clarified.

One obvious issue is whether the trend towards strongly centralized administration shall be maintained or reversed. Another issue is whether we shall or shall not continue to subsidize selected foreign governments as potential or actual allies. Still a third unresolved issue concerns the future of free enterprise, in much more than the narrowly commercial sense of the phrase.

These particular issues, and indeed all others of national import which might be mentioned, are really separated aspects of one single underlying question of profound political significance. Is it our national purpose to subordinate American Society, in all its multiform aspects, to the will of those who direct a unitary State; or do we propose to reanimate the principle that government, in the United States, is the servant and not the master of the people?

It would be impossible to phrase a question more searching and more fundamental than this, on which every citizen has not merely the right but the duty to implement his considered opinion through the ballot. Yet, on the eve of election, it is forecast that little more than 50 per cent of the qualified electorate will go to the polls.

Something is radically wrong with the politics of a free country if only about half of its qualified citizens are prompted to participate personally in the choice of the Administration which will set the pattern for much more than the four years of its mandate.

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A political party must stand for some definite principle of government. That principle must be so clear as to be readily understandable by the average citizen. It must also be so fundamental as to give guidance for taking a position on contentious problems, as these arise.

Without guiding principles, political parties are worse than meaningless. Without principles they become organizations interested only in the spoils and prerogatives of power. Such organizations tend to prevent rather than to promote good government. And the greater the power at their disposal, the greater the injury they may do to the Society they dominate. The National Socialist Party in Germany stands out as the classic illustration of an utterly unprincipled political party. Its accomplishment was the destruction of Germany.

Because of the structure of our government, political organization in the United States has from the outset been a relatively simple matter. The decision to establish a Federal Republic itself decided the form which our politics would take. There was certain to be one party emphasizing the advantages which would accrue from centralizing power in the national government. There was certain to be another party emphasizing the dangers, and the potential loss of individual liberty, to be expected from abandonment of local self-government.

Although there is not a line about political parties in the Constitution, this organic law clearly implies the development of the two parties which have come to be known as "major" in American political history. The Constitution attempts to harmonize two conflicting principles -- delegation of power to central authority and reservation of power from central authority.

It was therefore inevitable that party government in the United States would revolve around the unsettled point of how much power should be delegated to Washington and how much reserved for the states. On the one hand, the first Article of the Constitution (Section 8) gives Congress specific power to promote the "general welfare". On the other hand, the Tenth Amendment states with equal authority that:

> "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

In these conflicting principles is found the basis of American party conflict. The balance of power essential to our theory of government is preserved in practice by the rivalry of two parties. The Republicans may not be greatly interested in democracy. The Democrats may not be concerned about the Republic. But by their rivalry a democratic Republic has been maintained.

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The Civil War decided a part of the unresolved problem of the desirable extent of centralization. The victory of the North determined, presumably for all time, that states cannot actually secede from the Union. But, as some Americans are now for the first time beginning to realize, the conquest of the Southern states did not mean -- to them -- that they must submit to any code of so-called "civil rights" as arbitrarily laid down in Washington.

Until last July, when the Democratic National Convention decided to subordinate States' Rights to Civil Rights, that particular party was at least nominally decentralist. The Republican Party, on the other hand, was from its origin the centralizing party. The GOP, always more or less aligned with business interests, has throughout been inclined to emphasize the tremendous advantage of the unified American market. It was impossible for Republican leadership to advocate States' Rights -- meaning, in the last analysis, political disunity -- while simultaneously working for economic unity.

While the Democratic Party completely reversed its philosophy under the New Deal, the tendencies which Mr. Roosevelt promoted were ready to his hand. In addition to its traditional emphasis on States' Rights the Democratic Party, especially in the North, was exactly what its name implies. It was a levelling party, opposed to concentration of wealth as well as to concentration of economic power. It emphasized the closing, as well as the penultimate, clause of the Tenth Amendment.

The Democratic Party has now split -- probably irrevocably -- into two parts, each of them representing a part of its historic philosophy. But with the separation of the States' Rights faction the remainder of the Democratic Party has become clearly, if not yet frankly, socialistic. During his entire campaign President Truman has preached pure Socialism and nothing else. If ever there were wasted votes, they will be those cast next Tuesday for Norman Thomas, the nominal but no longer the actual standard bearer of American Socialism.

The candidate of the Republican Party, on the other hand, has advocated little or nothing but glittering generalities. This is not altogether the fault of Mr. Dewey, though he has given strong indications of regarding occupation of the White House as an end in itself. But the party of which Mr. Dewey is titular head is itself deeply confused and divided. It is generally opposed to the extension of Federal powers, but not to the extent that its candidate will risk the loss of votes on any specific issue.

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As the Democratic Party becomes openly socialistic, the Republican Party should theoretically become anti-socialistic, along political as well as economic lines. Its leadership has certainly been vociferous in demanding less government in business. Republican leadership has been far less definite in urging the development of clean, strong local government in opposition to the sprawling Federal power.

Especially in our muddled and over-extended foreign policy, demanding ever more centralization of power and ever greater Federal expenditures, the GOP has been deficient in clear direction. Its current leadership seems content to parrot the outworn slogan that: "Politics stop at the water's edge." Politics can stop at the water's edge only when policies stop at the water's edge. Policies no longer stop there.

It is the political chicanery apparent in party leadership which undoubtedly accounts for a large part of the general public apathy as this Presidential campaign draws to its close. The voter has the right to expect that every candidate will come clean on matters of fundamental principle. On that basis, how do they measure up?

Harry Truman has turned Socialist, without admitting it -- perhaps even without knowing it. Tom Dewey is trying to be anti-Socialist, but not if any important block of votes is jeopardized by taking a stand on principle. Norman Thomas is running as an old-line Socialist out of habit, even though the Democrats have swiped his whole bag of panaceas. Henry Wallace is pitifully trying to pretend that his "Progressive" Party is not under Communist direction and control.

Politics is not a matter of politicians. It is a matter of principle. Only one candidate has really taken a stand on principle in this election. You may dislike his principles, or you may approve them. But you cannot deny that they are principles, and that they have been upheld by that candidate in the best American tradition of honest exposition. For that reason many myopic journalists must hurriedly produce a crop of alibis to explain away the showing of Governor J. Strom Thurmond, of South Carolina.

Governor Thurmond may be only a flash in the pan. But if the States' Rights Party can rise above the low level of Southern provincialism, it should have a notable political future. That is because at least potentially it stands for something deep-rooted in the American tradition. To that, many Americans will never be apathetic.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events October 27, 1948

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By Frank C. Hanighen

As the campaign goes into the home stretch, some of the shrewder observers ask the question: Aren't commentators unduly emphasizing the chances that the GOP will lose the Senate? It is agreed that the Senate fight rates as of crucial importance, and certainly the way the Senate contests fall is unfortunate for the Republicans. The problem has not lacked intense and minute scrutiny. Last Sunday (October 24), the Washington Post devoted reams of copy to the matter, with special reports on the tides of battle in key states. The New York Times has given detailed analysis to the various possibilities arising in the Senate next January. But some in the Capital, who try to assess the situation as coldly as a gambler placing his money, wonder if the spate of words hasn't inevitably given the impression that the GOP is in greater danger than is actually the fact.

The GOP may well lose control of the Upper Chamber; it would be folly for Republican leadership to discount the possibility. But, any appraisal of the Senate race should include consideration of a somewhat parallel situation in the last Presidential campaign. In October, 1944, there were many observers who, while believing that FDR would defeat Governor Dewey, thought that the Republicans might win control of the House of Representatives. Afterwards, it was easy to smile at the thesis. But, at the time, it had its attractive aspects. On the eve of the 1944 elections, the score in the Lower House stood as follows: Democrats, 214; Republicans, 212; minor parties, 4; vacancies, 5. And Republican surveys made out a case that in this state and that the local situation favored GOP House members, even if Dewey lost. Newsweek (October 30, 1944) said, "This year a surprising number of political observers have subscribed to the frequently heard prophecy: The House will go Republican on November 7 regardless of the outcome of the Presidential race. Not only have Republican leaders advanced the claim: some Democrats privately have agreed with them. Noteworthy this week was the fact that out of 50 prominent Washington correspondents participating in the Newsweek Periscope poll, 30 believed the Republicans would capture the House, although only 21 predicted the election of Governor Dewey."

The 1944 situation serves as a cautionary reminder to those who are forecasting a Democratic victory in the Senate this year. It is well to recall the election-eve opinion in 1944 of the veteran Washington correspondent, Gould Lincoln of the Evening Star. On November 5, 1944, Lincoln wrote: "Unless the Republicans are able to carry the country for Dewey, however, the chances are decidedly against their electing a majority of the House."

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Briefs ---- Comments on critical Senatorial contests miss the mark widely, as may be seen in the case of Senator Revercomb's fight for re-election in West Virginia. In Eastern cities, one gets the impression from the press that Revercomb stands in danger of defeat because he sponsored the controversial Displaced Persons bill. According to our informants in West Virginia, Revercomb (if he loses) will go down because of other factors -- among them the oft-repeated statement that he isn't a native West Virginian. The Senator, it seems, was born across the line in Virginia. With such stuff, indeed, elections are often won or lost. But, all reports indicate, Revercomb's authorship of the DP bill will not adversely affect his chances. Indeed, it is claimed that a number of voters will support him because they approve his stand on the DP bill.

---- Cabinet talk has entered a new phase during the past week. Prognosticators are now naming those whom (they say) Dewey will not name. One of these is

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Mr. Winthrop Aldrich, of the Chase National Bank, who has been mentioned as possible Secretary of the Treasury. It is now asserted that the Treasury post will go to some Midwestern banker; the label "Wall Street" is considered too grave a political handicap to overcome, even for so able a financier as Aldrich. The second person whose name is disappearing from lists is that of Governor Ford, of Montana, suggested for the Interior post. Ford's stock has slumped as reports come in about his reduced popularity in Montana. Ford is expected to win his race, but has incurred disfavor because of a Montana tradition against re-election of Governors.

---- Sam Pettengill in a recent excellent release (distributed by the Committee for Constitutional Government, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y.) answered the question, "What Happened to Harry?" Pettengill said: "To campaign for civil rights in Northern cities and say nothing on the subject in Texas puts a big question mark at the end of a campaign tour. In 1904, when Theodore Roosevelt was campaigning for President, he spoke in Denver, Colorado. Bryan had carried Colorado twice for 16 to 1. T. R. was told to lay off the money question. But at a packed auditorium that night, the President's first words were: 'I am for the gold standard in New York' -- a pause to let that sink in -- 'and I am for the gold standard in Colorado'! The crowd lifted the roof off in the homage the American people always pay to courage. Roosevelt carried the state." The American people today -- Pettengill thinks -- do not like Truman's lack of courage and his insincerity.

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If the States' Rights Party can rise above provincialism (see Felix Morley's remarks elsewhere in this issue), it indeed will throw down a challenge to those who work for centralized government. However, the Party so far has shown little capacity for extending its influence outside the South. As the polls open, the States' Rights designation appears on only one State ballot in the North -- in North Dakota, politically a rather unusual state. Waving the Stars and Bars and responding emotionally to the racial issue hardly indicates a spirit on which a truly national party can be built. It is true, of course, that Thurmond has had too little time to create a national organization. But, whatever the will, the way has been such that the States' Rights Party today is very definitely a Southern party.

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Administration election politics was seen in an episode which occurred here on October 25. On that day, a delegation of German trade-union officials visited the Pentagon and offered to supply former German Luftwaffe pilots to help the Air Lift. The union leaders said the Germans wanted to play their part in the effort to supply Berlin. According to the first press reports on that day, the Defense Department officials said they would take the matter under consideration. But in a hasty follow-up story, the Department announced that they definitely were not considering the matter. Mr. Jay Lovestone, of the AF of L, who accompanied the German union officials, released the original story to the press. When asked by reporters if the Luftwaffe pilots mentioned would be former Nazi war fliers, Lovestone tartly replied: "There are no other German fliers." Lovestone, formerly head of the Communist Party of the United States, later turned anti-Communist, is now active in helping European trade-unions to combat the Communists.

Meanwhile, the Soviet makes no bones about formation of a German military police force in the Eastern zone of Germany. Estimates of its size run from 300,000 to 400,000. General Clay last week mentioned this force in an interview and significantly pointed out that there was no similar counterforce in the Western zones. Diplomatic observers in Washington wonder why not. Political observers answer, "There certainly won't be, at least until after November 2."

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The incessant query these days in Washington is "What will Dewey do?" During the past week, among financial observers, such talk turned to the bond market. Indeed, for some weeks, there had been reports that the insurance companies were dumping large blocks of long-term Government securities on the market. The reports remained for the most part unpublished because of the allergy of editors to the charge of scaremongering; no one wants to bear the responsibility for hastening a "crash", be it major or minor. Last week, the Federal Reserve report brought the situation finally to light. The dumping of long-term Government bonds, and their prompt purchase by the Federal Reserve, inspired much discussion of the cause and many questions as to what Dewey-if-President would do about the situation.

On one aspect, most observers are agreed: if Truman is defeated, Snyder retains so much faith in the bond-support policy that nothing will be done to alter it between November 2 and January 20. But what will Dewey do? -- the eternal refrain. This question, as regards the financial problem, remains unanswered; indeed, it seems to be quite unexplored by publicists trying to read the Governor's mind. The fact that the insurance companies did unload about a billion dollars worth of bonds is no indication of Dewey's attitude. The insurance executives reportedly calculate that the market for these bonds cannot go higher; may go lower. When in doubt, dump. This much is being said: it may be that Dewey, if elected, would prefer to have a "readjustment" right after his inauguration, rather than to postpone what many think is inevitable until a later and more perilous date, as future election days roll around. In any case, there is little doubt that in this matter Dewey will have to tackle one of his thorniest problems.

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Mr. Truman in a recent campaign utterance expressed satisfaction with the way our foreign policy is going. That was before the commencement of the evacuation of Manchuria by Chiang Kai-shek's troops. For some time American military advisers had been urging the Generalissimo to make this retreat -- a fact that the President should have known. It is hardly "all right", however, that China should lose its richest area to Soviet Russia. Nor is it all right for the United States. This evacuation of Manchuria is one of the greatest defeats inflicted on the directors of our foreign policy.

For the record, HUMAN EVENTS pointed this out three years ago, at a time when it was heresy to doubt the wisdom of the Administration's post-war settlements. On August 15, the very morrow of V-J Day, this publication said, "The likelihood is that Manchuria will at least remain a Russian sphere of influence, if it does not become an addition to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Since the Chinese Communists traditionally follow the lead of Moscow, their overlordship of these areas would be tantamount to making North China a part of Russia's sphere. This would place the real riches and power of China under Russia, leaving to Chiang Kai-shek only the poorer parts of the country." Today, not only are Chiang's forces in retreat in Manchuria, but Chiang's power is being challenged in central China, one of "the poorer parts of the country". The pessimistic forecast of HUMAN EVENTS, of over three years ago is abundantly confirmed now. But, the moral, as explained by this publication on August 15, 1945, is well worth reading these days in view of Mr. Truman's complacency about his foreign policy: "Now, the United States fundamentally went to war in the Pacific to ensure the integrity of China. If we had not opposed Japan's hegemony in China, there could hardly have come to pass the attack on Pearl Harbor. Any settlement, therefore, which permits the establishment of a Russian sphere over the wealthiest part of China constitutes clearly the loss of America's war in the Far East."

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Book Events

Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History, by Robert E. Sherwood. New York: Harper and Brothers. $6.00. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

In all the profusion of memoirs dealing with the fateful Roosevelt epoch, these, I think, should prove of most value to the historian. When Harry Hopkins died in 1946, he left little in the way of an estate, but it included forty-odd filing cabinets containing an accumulation of letters, notes, memoranda, diaries and copies of official papers relating to the tremendous affairs of state in which he had been involved. Mr. Sherwood has woven the Hopkins documents and his own recollections of the personages and events concerned in them into a narrative of only slightly less than a thousand pages. And while his book has many defects of style and arrangement, it does not appear that he has slighted or suppressed anything of importance.

The general effect of these revelations is to improve Harry Hopkins' reputation at the expense of his master's. It becomes clear that all the important decisions involving the destinies of the earth were taken by Mr. Roosevelt alone, and that Hopkins, with fanatical faith in his hero's infallibility, applied himself with indomitable zeal to the task of making certain that the Presidential purposes were realized to the smallest particular. He was, in short, an idolatrous romantic of the type which derives confidence and power by becoming an instrument of the will and purposes of the adored leader. Such personalities are not of course uncommon, and Mr. Sherwood, without seeming to recognize the implications, advances an ingenious argument that the whole character of American education predisposes us toward the Fuehrer Prinzip. What was uncommon about Hopkins was the combination of his psychological submissiveness with an extraordinary executive genius. He had an invaluable skill at cutting through bureaucratic or diplomatic obfuscations to the heart of any practical problem; he had also an immense audacity and an intolerance of ritual and propriety that enabled him to thrust aside obstacles and difficulties. Apart from one little spasm of ambition, when he cherished preposterous hopes of succeeding Mr. Roosevelt in the Presidency, and tried to further them by shabby intrigues, Hopkins seems to have sought nothing for himself, except perhaps a sense of power. And though he dispensed billions upon billions, with a largesse unheard of since the beginning of the world, he died, as we have seen, in relative poverty.

By nature a romantic reformer and by training a social worker, with no great knowledge of the world and largely ignorant of history, Hopkins was inclined to a sentimental pacifism, and his attitude toward foreign affairs before 1940, as far as he had any, was pretty much that of a midwestern isolationist. But he abandoned this view without qualm or hesitation, when he knew that Roosevelt had become persuaded that the defeat of Britain, or even a peace by negotiation, would be disastrous to the interests of the United States. Mr. Sherwood's book leaves us in no doubt that the decision of the Administration to enter the war was made long in advance of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In March, 1941, members of the British General Staff, disguised as civilian employees of the Purchasing Commission, met secretly in Washington with American staff officers. At this conference it was agreed that the war with Germany would have precedence over the war with Japan; and it was on this basis that Hopkins prepared his curious system of priorities for lend-lease, under which, according to General Deane, the needs of Russia were placed above those of the armed forces of the United States. Hopkins' subsequent course in diplomacy was determined by three principles which he had accepted as de fide: (1) that participation in the war was necessary; (2) that Russian collaboration in the peace must be purchased at any cost; (3) General Marshall's conviction that the war in the Pacific could not be won without Russian assistance.

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